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(54) **BATTERY CELL ASSEMBLIES**

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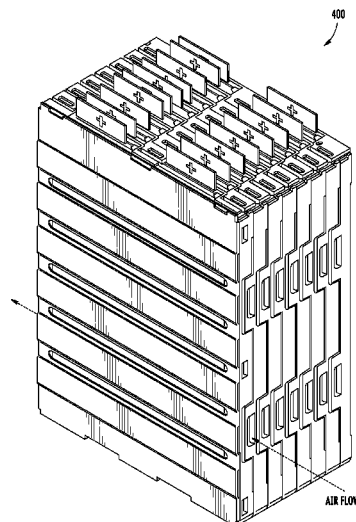
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A battery cell assembly in accordance with an exemplary embodiment is provided. The assembly includes a first frame member having a first plurality of tabs extending away from a first peripheral edge of the first frame member. Each tab of the first plurality of tabs has a first coupling feature at a distal end of the respective tab. The assembly further includes a second frame member having a plurality of slots extending into a second peripheral edge of the second frame member. The assembly further includes a battery cell disposed between the first and second frame members, and each first coupling feature of each tab of the first plurality of tabs is configured to engage a respective slot of the plurality of slots of the second frame member to fixedly hold the first and second frame members together.

7 Claims, 15 Drawing Sheets



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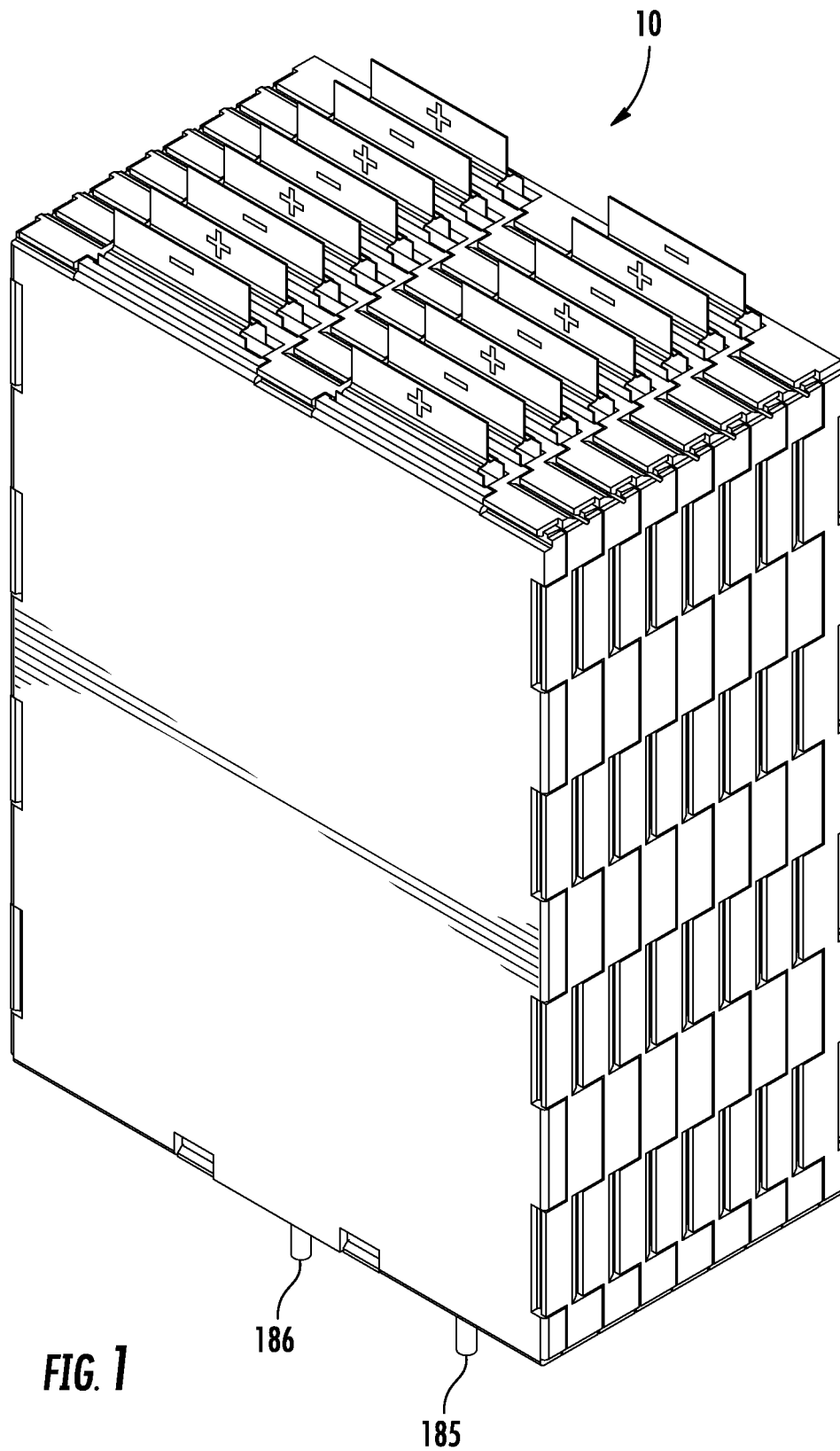
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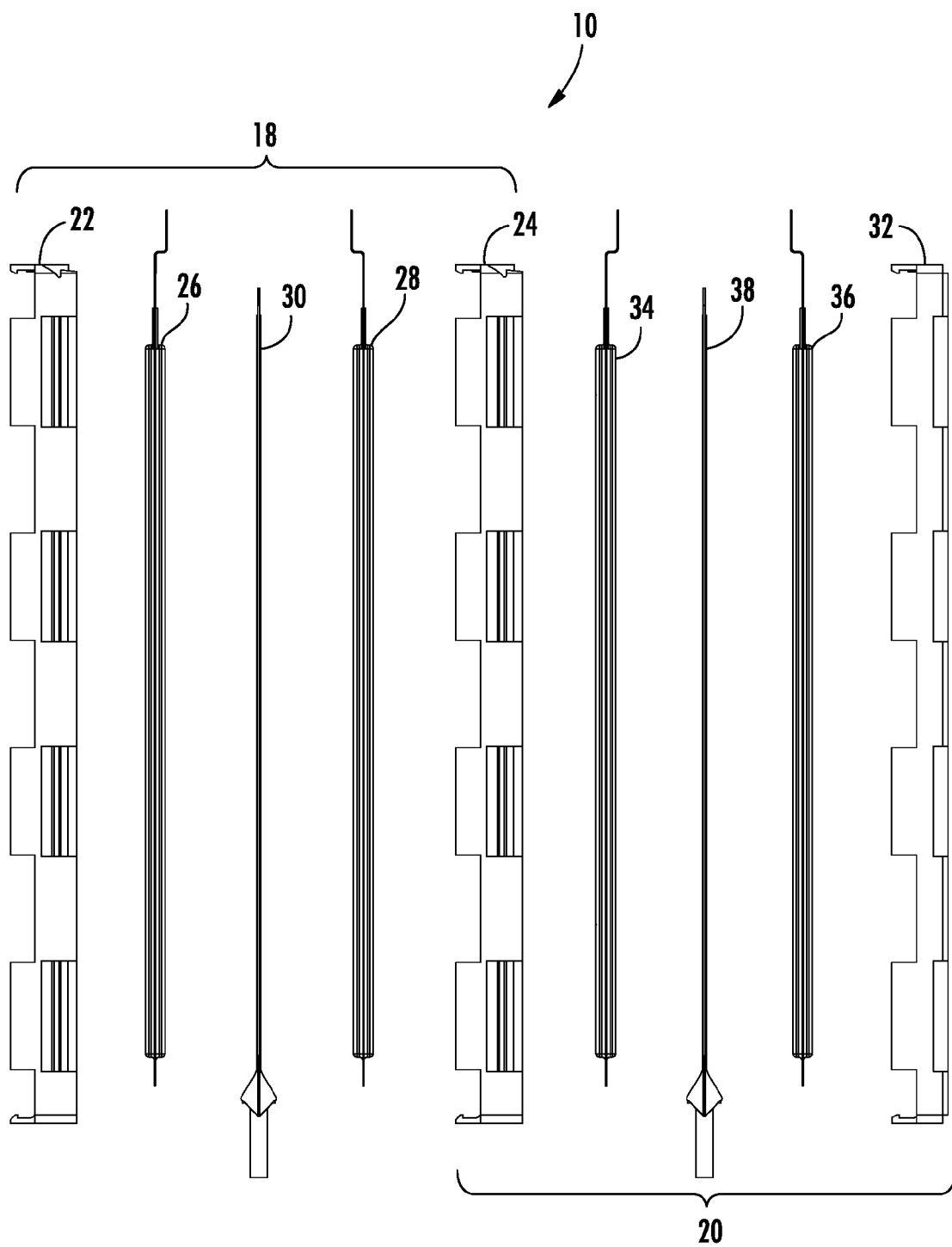
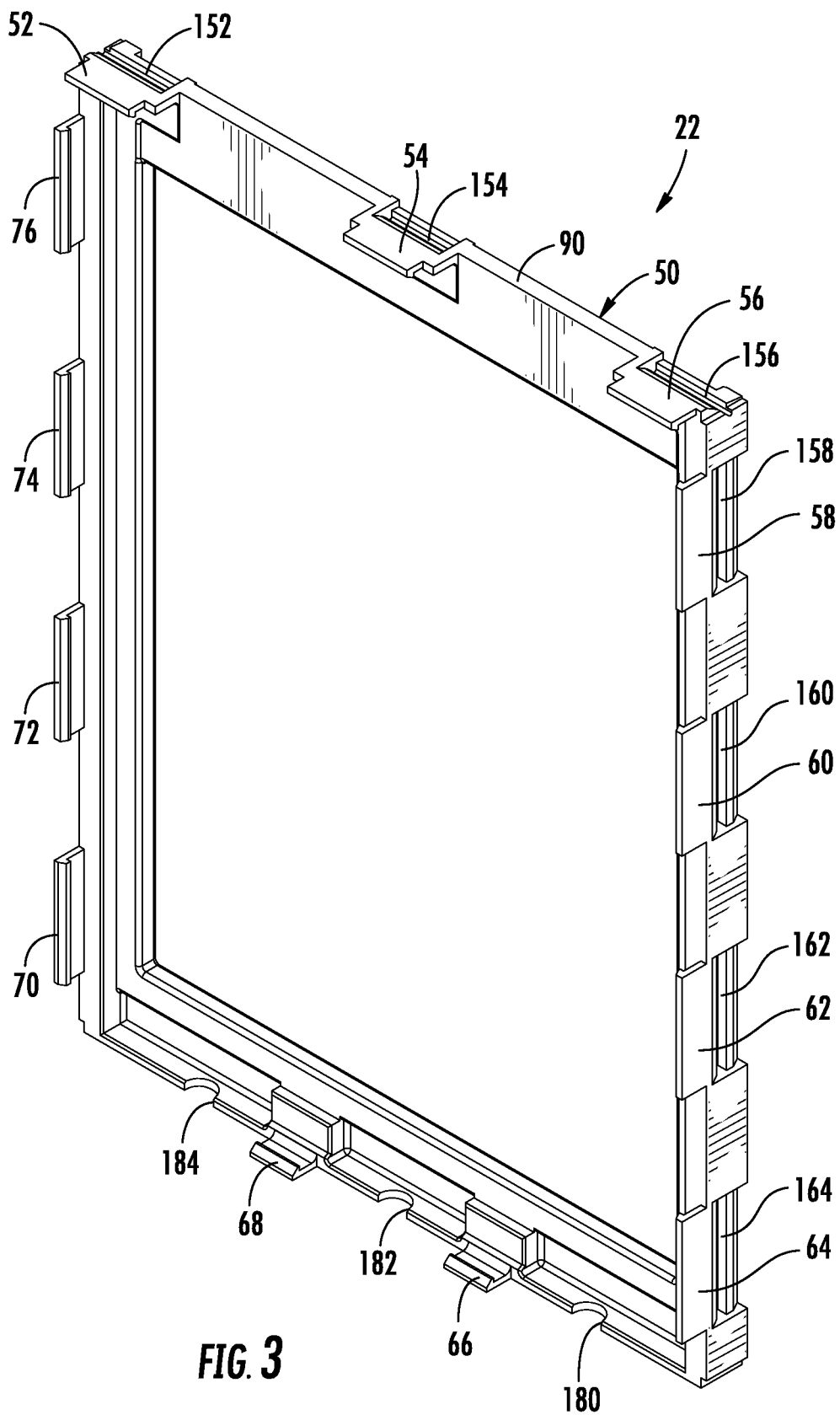


FIG. 2



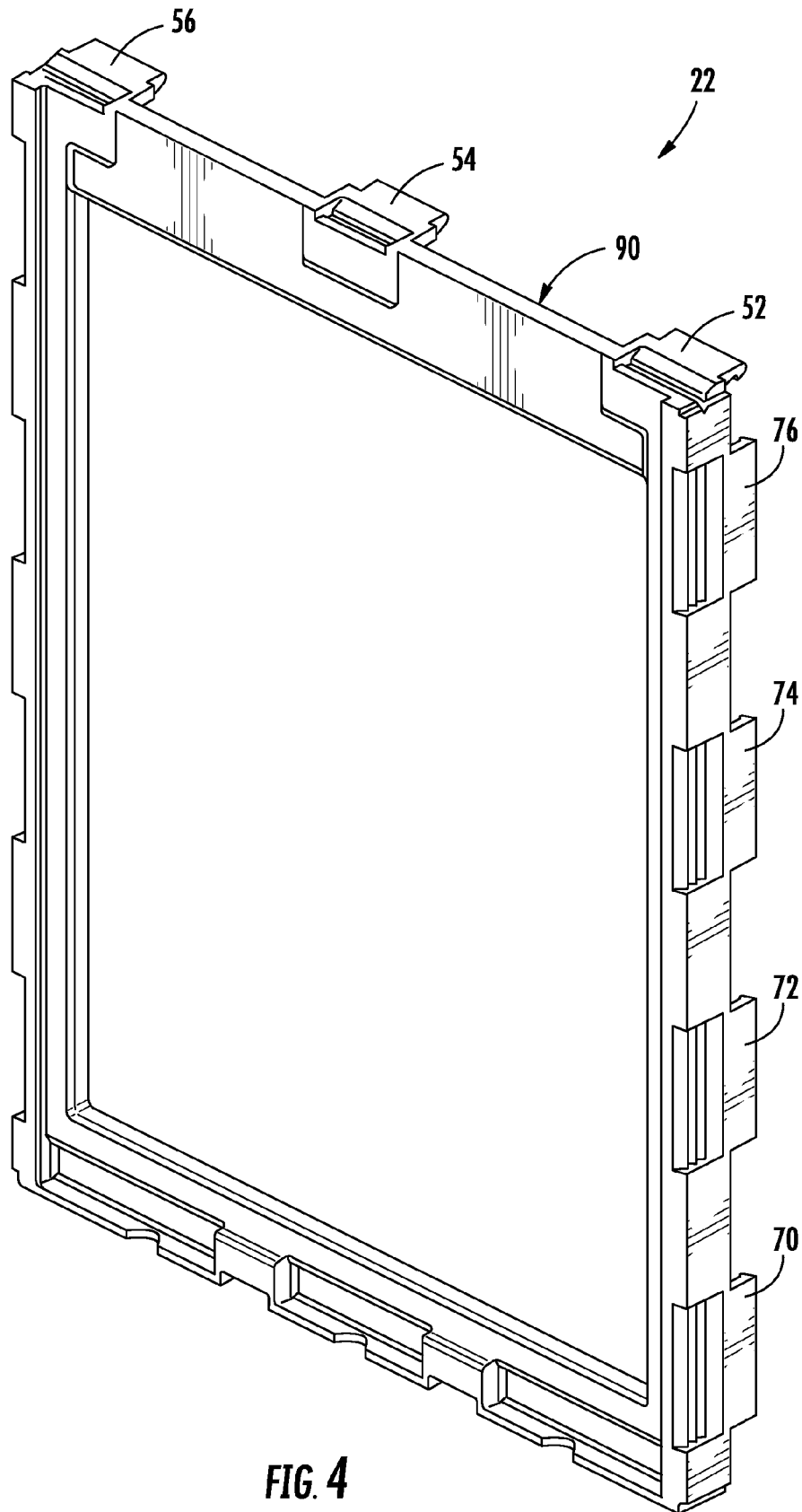


FIG. 4

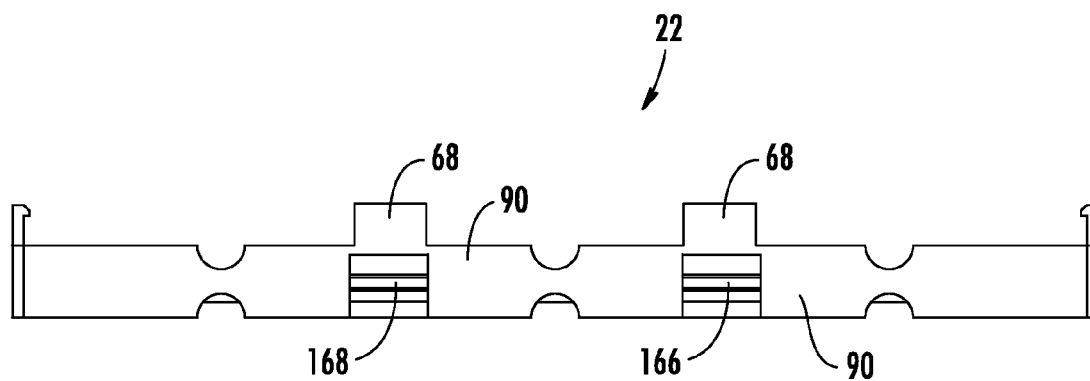


FIG. 5

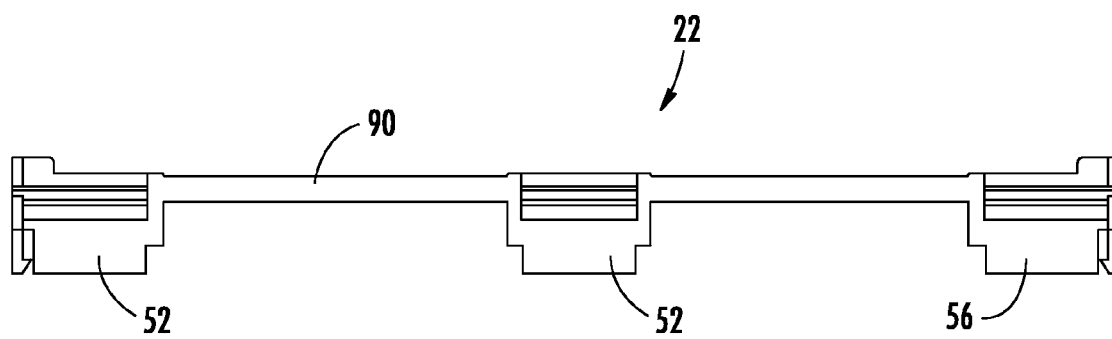
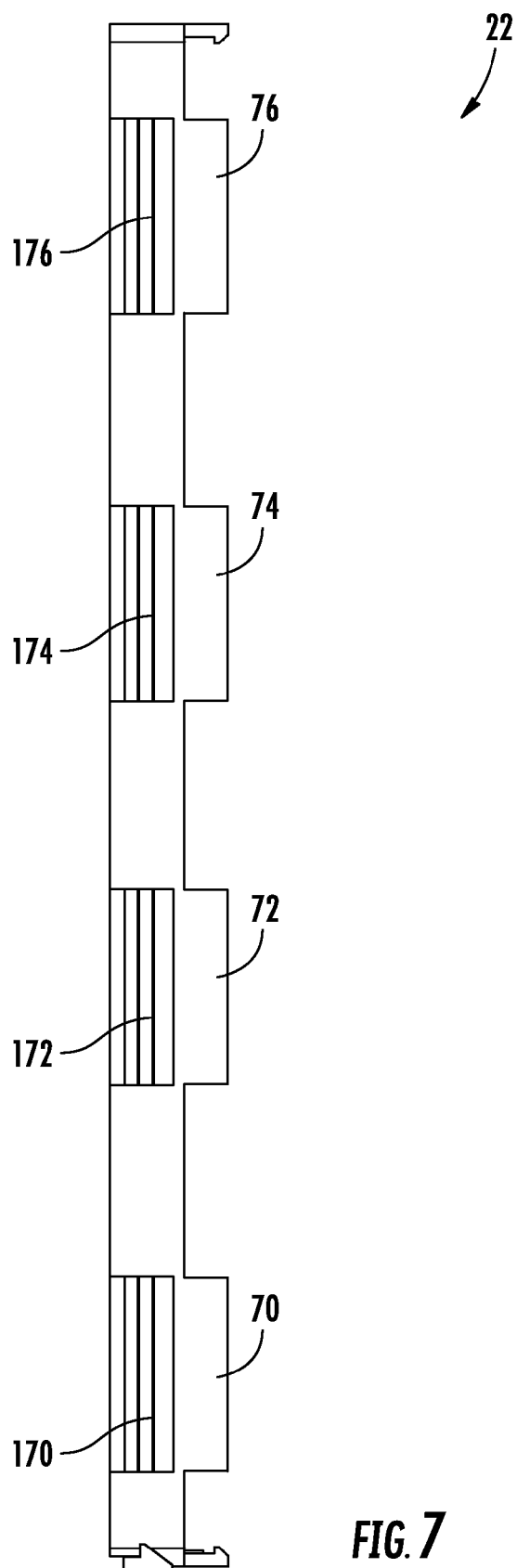


FIG. 6



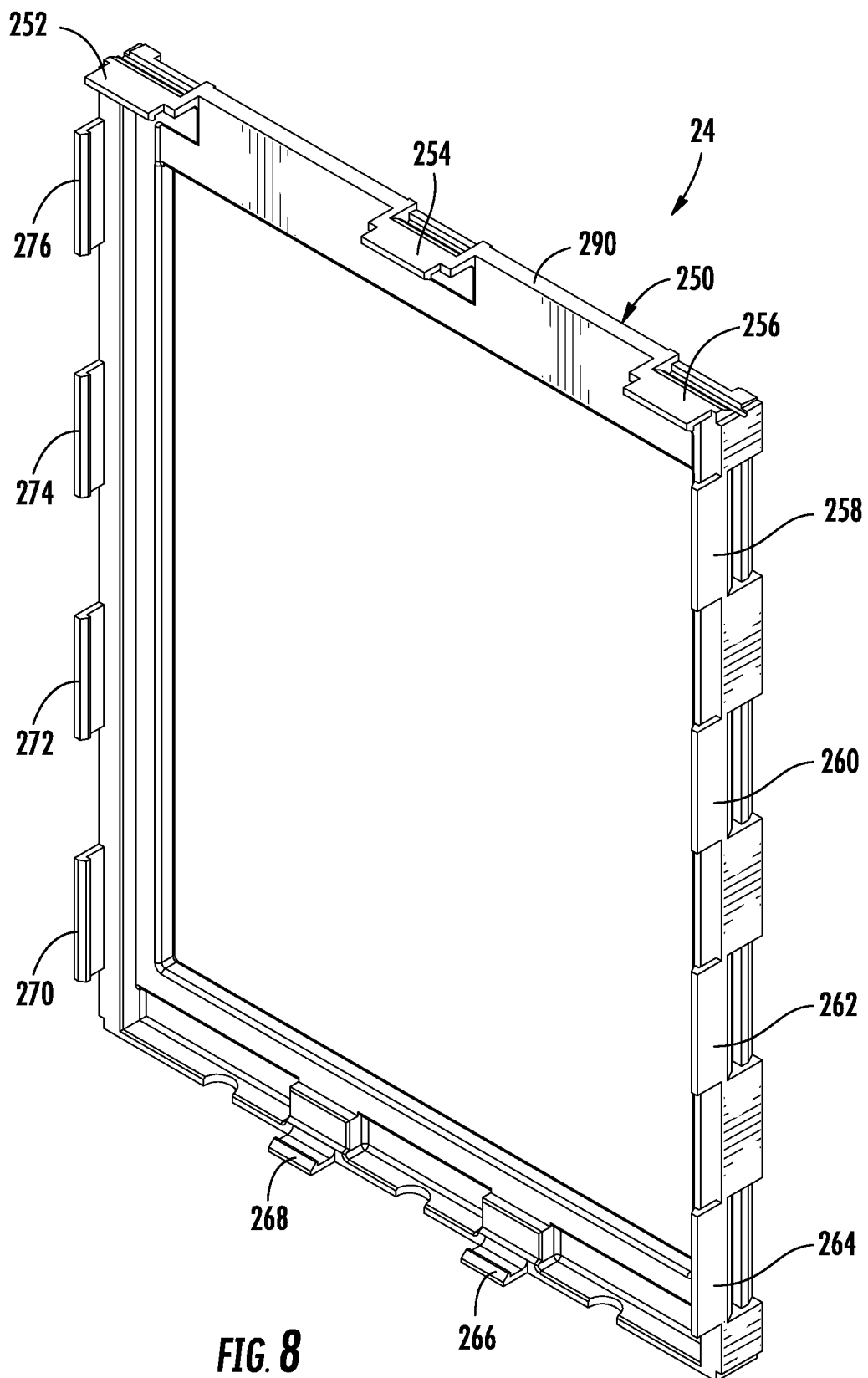


FIG. 8

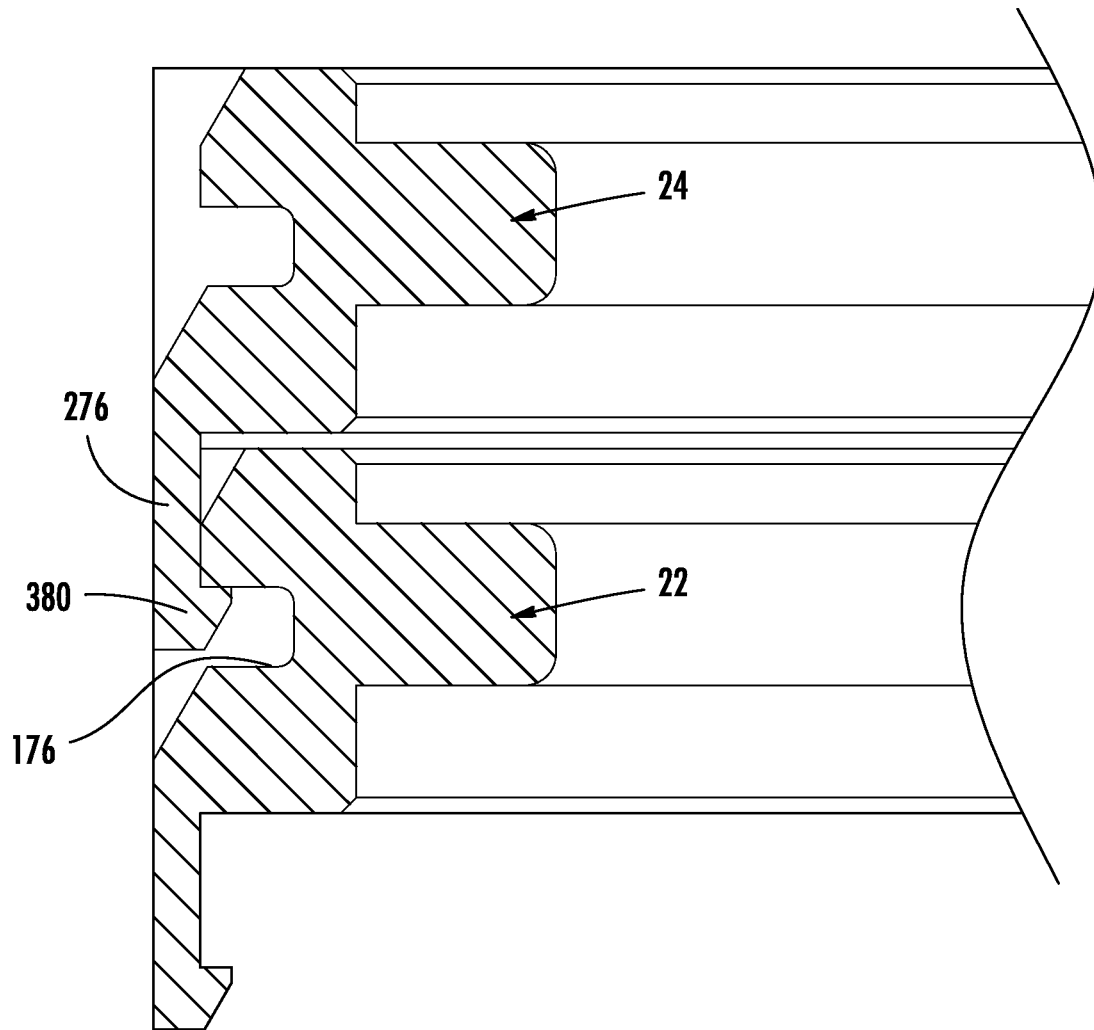


FIG. 9

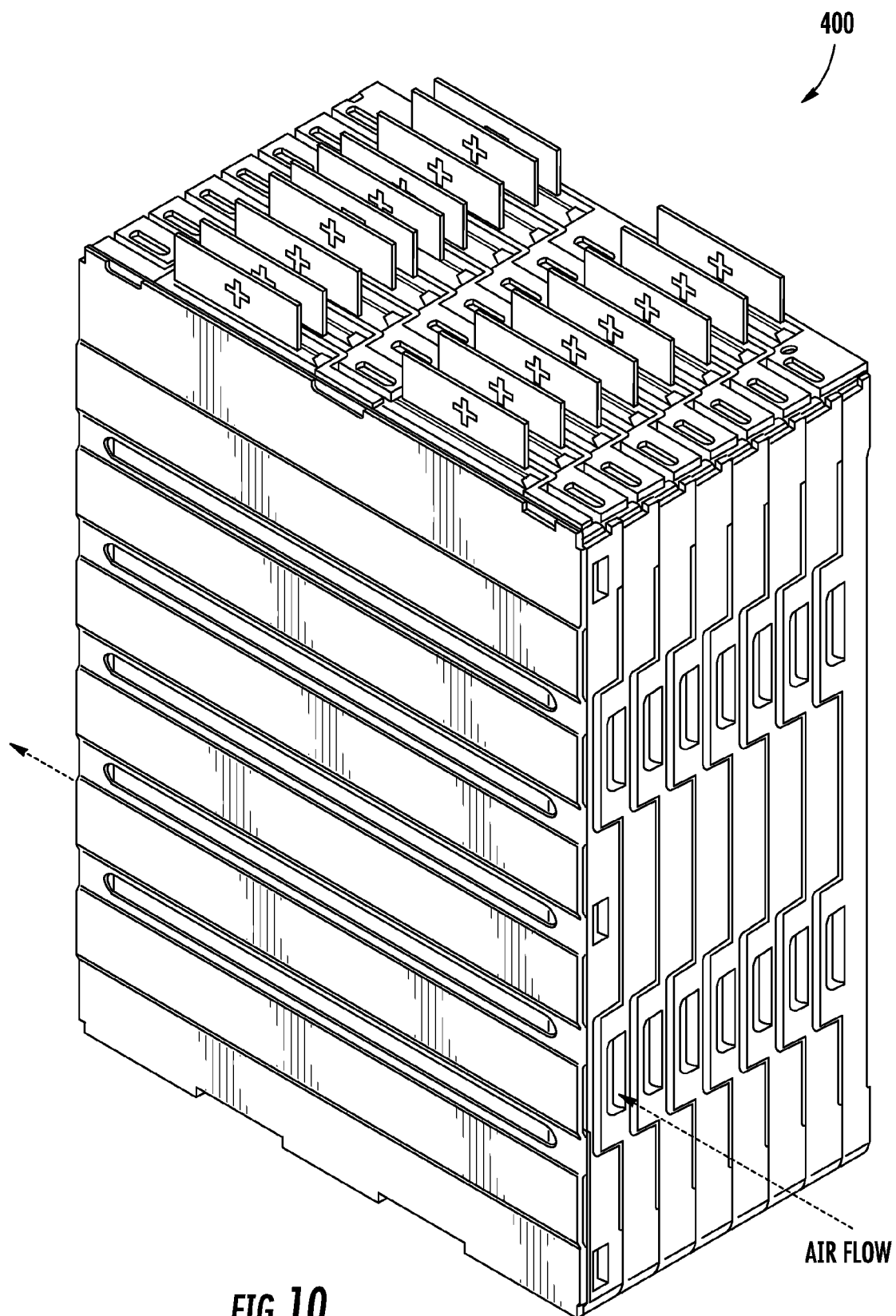


FIG. 10

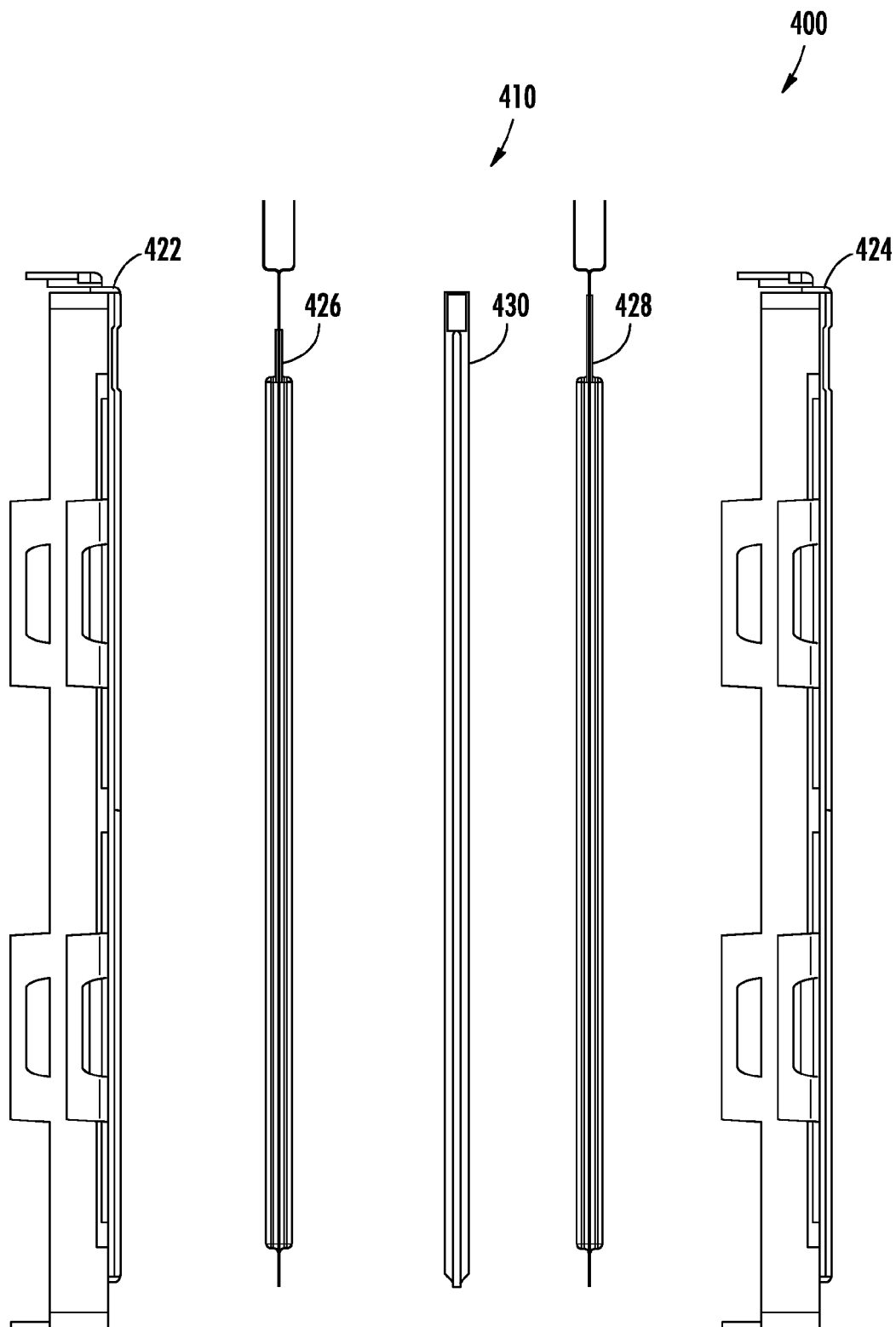
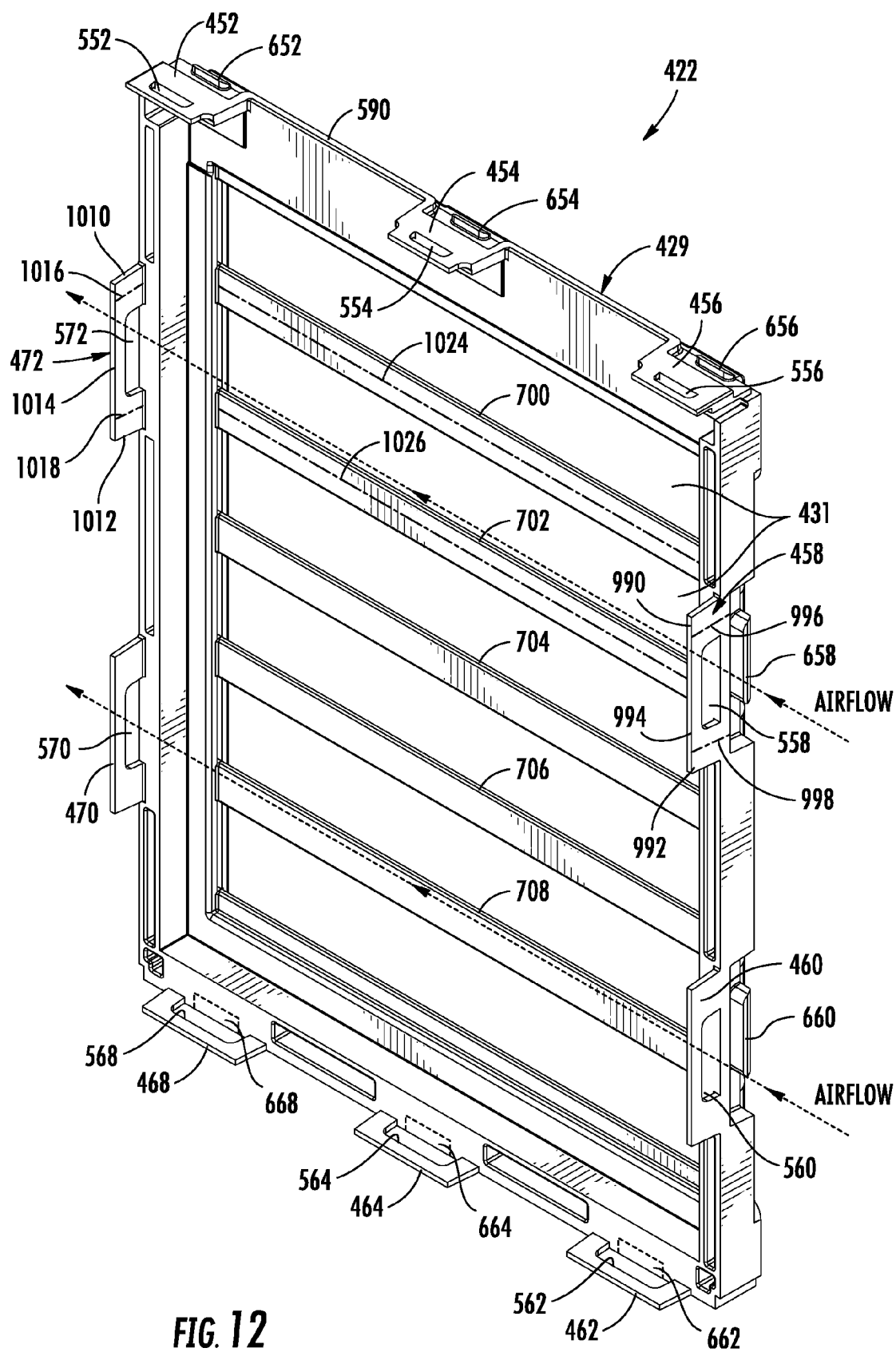


FIG. 11



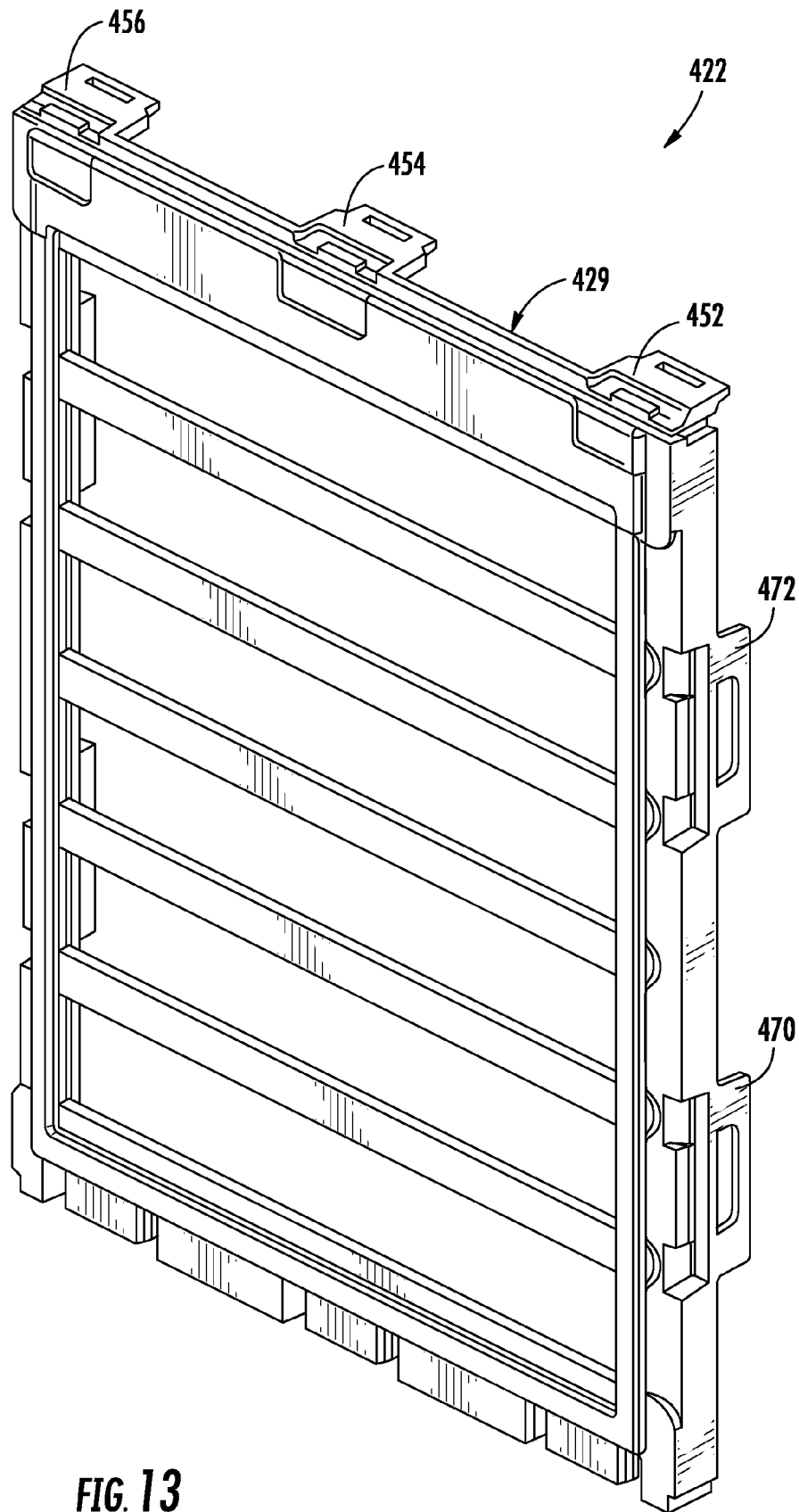


FIG. 13

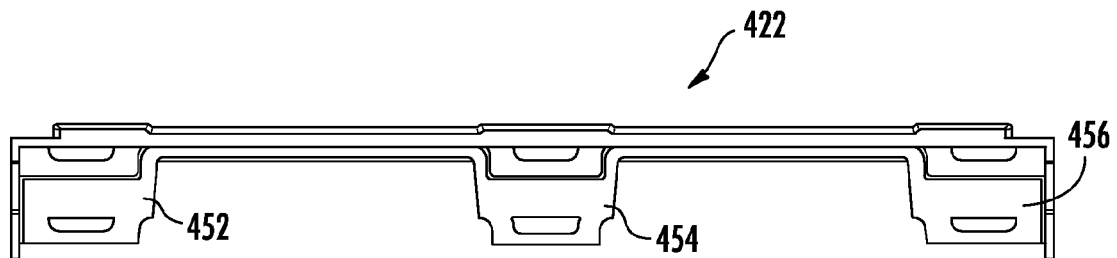


FIG. 14

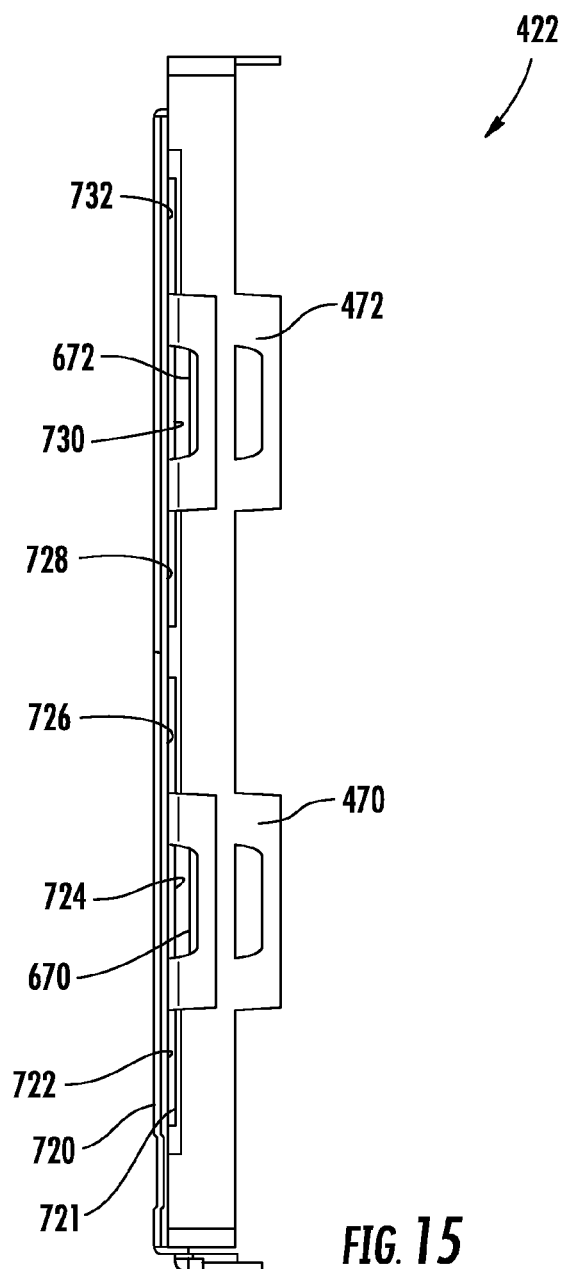
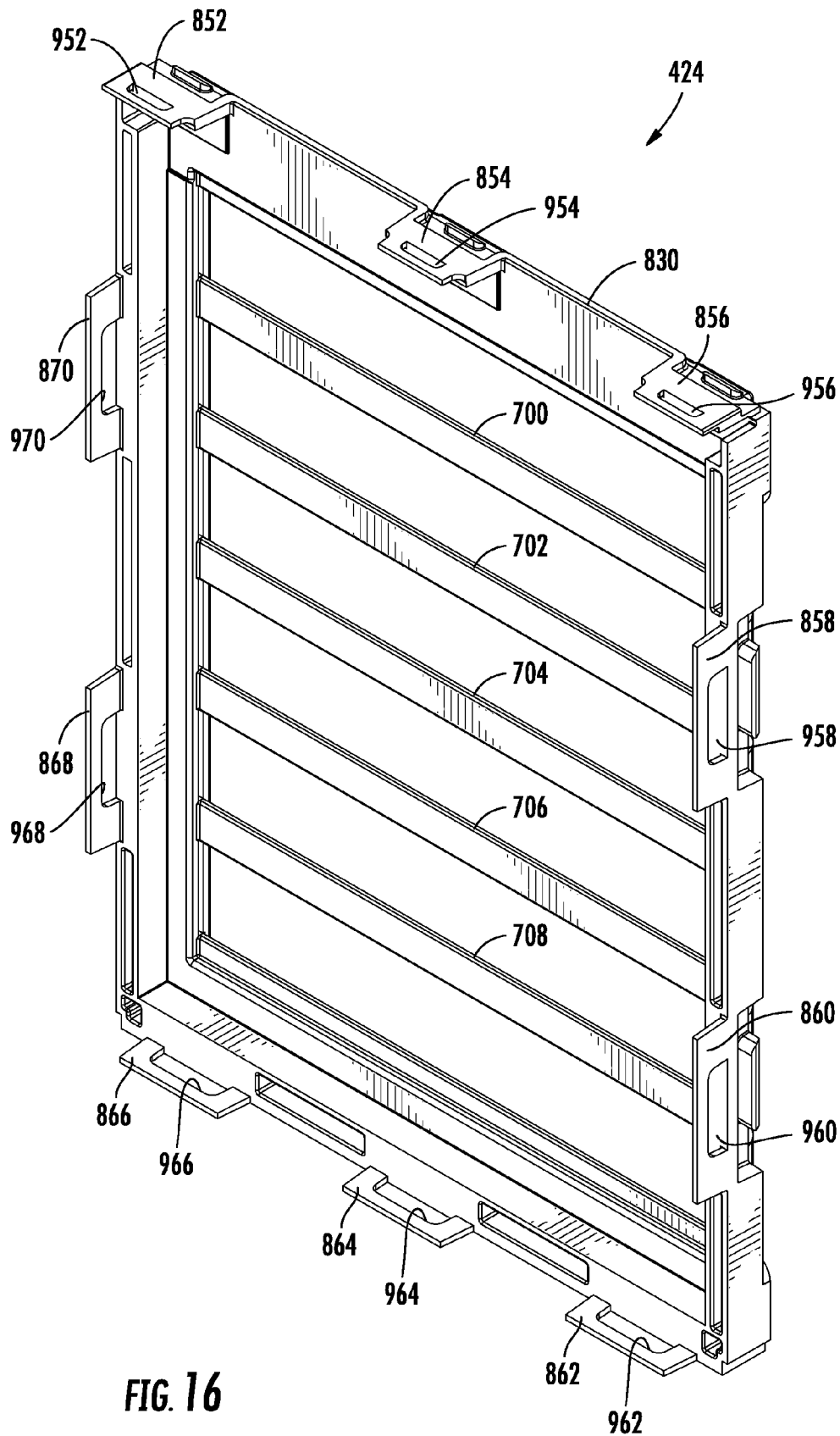


FIG. 15



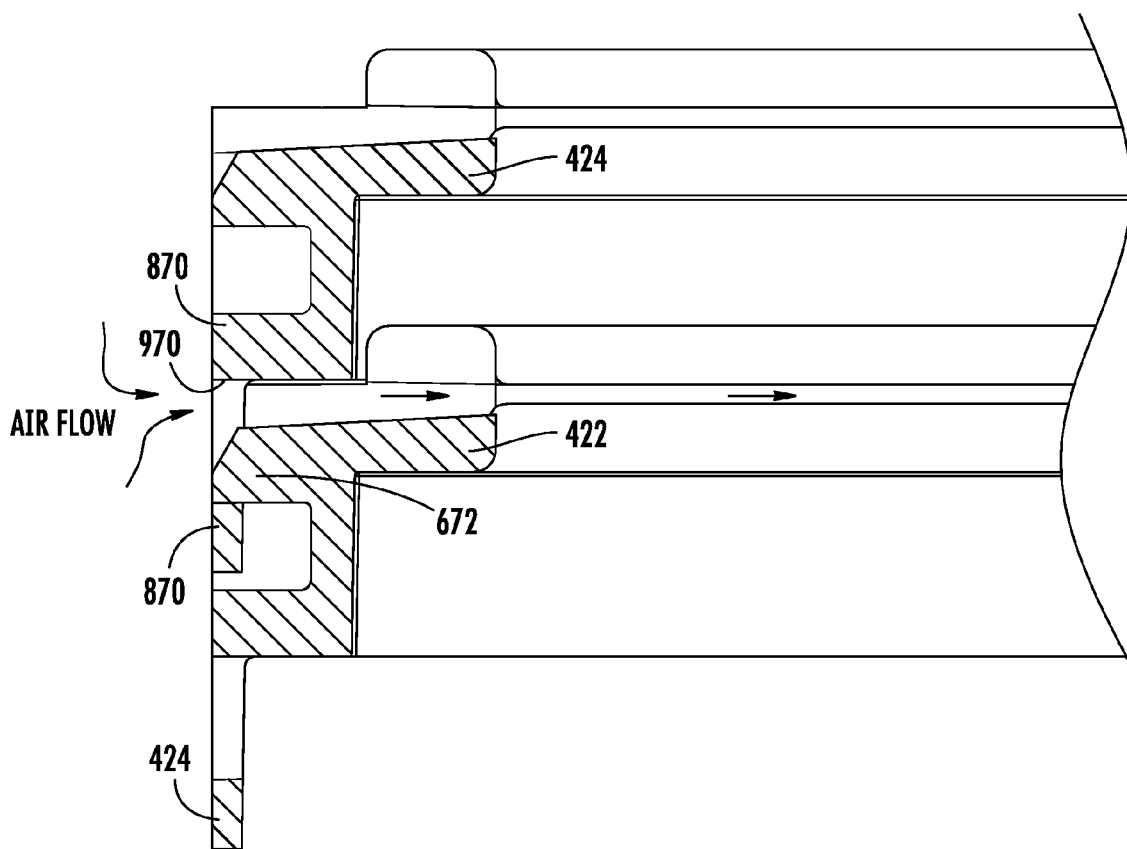


FIG. 17

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BATTERY CELL ASSEMBLIES**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

This application is a divisional of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/857,908 filed on Aug. 17, 2010 which claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/325,290 filed on Apr. 17, 2010, and the entire contents of both of these applications are hereby incorporated by reference herein.

BACKGROUND

This application relates generally to battery cell assemblies, and more particularly to a battery cell assemblies having frame members with retaining tabs.

SUMMARY

A battery cell assembly in accordance with an exemplary embodiment is provided. The assembly includes a first frame member having a first plurality of tabs extending away from a first peripheral edge of the first frame member. Each tab of the first plurality of tabs has a first coupling feature at a distal end of the respective tab. The assembly further includes a second frame member having a plurality of slots extending into a second peripheral edge of the second frame member. The assembly further includes a battery cell disposed between the first and second frame members, and each first coupling feature of each tab of the first plurality of tabs is configured to engage a respective slot of the plurality of slots of the second frame member to fixedly hold the first and second frame members together.

A frame member in accordance with another exemplary embodiment is provided. The frame member includes a rectangular ring-shaped portion having a plurality of tabs extending away from a peripheral edge of the rectangular ring-shaped portion. Each tab of the plurality of tabs has a coupling feature at a distal end of the respective tab. The rectangular ring-shaped portion further includes a plurality of slots extending into a peripheral edge of the rectangular ring-shaped portion. Each slot of the plurality of slots is proximate to a respective tab of the plurality of tabs.

A battery cell assembly in accordance with another exemplary embodiment is provided. The assembly includes a first frame member having a first plurality of tabs extending away from a first peripheral edge of the first frame member in a first direction. Each tab of the first plurality of tabs has an aperture extending therethrough. The first frame member further includes a first plurality of coupling members extending from an inner region of the first frame member and having distal ends proximate to the first peripheral edge. Each coupling member of the first plurality coupling members extends generally perpendicular to a respective tab of the first plurality of tabs that is disposed proximate to the respective coupling member. The assembly further includes a second frame member having a second plurality of tabs extending away from a second peripheral edge of the second frame member in the first direction. Each tab of the second plurality of tabs has an aperture extending therethrough. The assembly further includes a battery cell disposed between the first and second frame members, and each tab of the second plurality of tabs of the second frame member is configured to engage a respective coupling member of the first plurality coupling members to fixedly hold the first and second frame members together.

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A frame member in accordance with another exemplary embodiment is provided. The frame member includes a rectangular ring-shaped portion having a plurality of tabs extending away from a peripheral edge of the rectangular ring-shaped portion in a first direction. Each tab of the plurality of tabs has an aperture extending therethrough. The rectangular ring-shaped portion further includes a plurality of coupling members extending from an inner region of the rectangular ring-shaped portion and having distal ends proximate to the peripheral edge. Each coupling member of the plurality coupling members extend generally perpendicular to a respective tab of the plurality of tabs that is disposed proximate to the respective coupling member.

These and other advantages and features will become more apparent from the following description taken in conjunction with the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is an isometric view of a battery module in accordance with an exemplary embodiment;

FIG. 2 is an exploded view of a portion of the battery module of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is an isometric view of a frame member utilized in the battery module of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is another isometric view of the frame member of FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is a bottom view of the frame member of FIG. 3;

FIG. 6 is a top view of the frame member of FIG. 3;

FIG. 7 is a side view of the frame member of FIG. 3;

FIG. 8 is an isometric view of another frame member utilized in the battery module of FIG. 1;

FIG. 9 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of a portion of the frame members of FIGS. 3 and 8, respectively, when the frame members are coupled together;

FIG. 10 is an isometric view of another battery module in accordance with another exemplary embodiment;

FIG. 11 is an exploded view of a portion of the battery module of FIG. 10;

FIG. 12 is an isometric view of a frame member utilized in the battery module of FIG. 10;

FIG. 13 is another isometric view of the frame member of FIG. 12;

FIG. 14 is a top view of the frame member of FIG. 12;

FIG. 15 is a side view of the frame member of FIG. 12;

FIG. 16 is an isometric view of another frame member utilized in the battery module of FIG. 19;

FIG. 17 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of a portion of the frame members of FIGS. 12 and 16, respectively, when the frame members are coupled together.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring to FIG. 1, a battery module 10 in accordance with an exemplary embodiment is illustrated. The battery module 10 is configured to provide electrical power to either a primary drive train of the vehicle or an auxiliary drive train of a vehicle. For purposes of discussion, only a portion of the battery module 10 will be described in greater detail below. In particular, referring to FIG. 2, the battery module 10 includes in part, a battery cell assembly 18 and a battery cell assembly 20.

Referring to FIGS. 1-9, the battery cell assembly 18 includes frame members 22, 24, battery cells 26, 28, and a cooling manifold or fin 30. The battery cell assembly 20 includes frame members 24, 32, battery cells 34, 36 and a

cooling manifold **38**. For purposes of simplicity, only the battery cell assembly **18** will be discussed in further detail below.

The frame members **22**, **24** are configured to be coupled together to hold the battery cells **26**, **28** and the cooling fin **30** therebetween, as will be discussed in greater detail below.

Referring to FIGS. 3-8, the frame member **22** includes a rectangular ring-shaped portion or body **50** and tabs **52**, **54**, **56**, **58**, **60**, **62**, **64**, **66**, **68**, **70**, **72**, **74**, **76**. The tabs **52-76** extend away from a peripheral edge **90** of the rectangular ring-shaped portion **50** in a first direction. In an alternative embodiment, the frame member **22** could have a greater number of tabs or a lesser number of tabs than those tabs shown. The rectangular ring-shaped portion **50** includes a plurality of slots **152**, **154**, **156**, **158**, **160**, **162**, **164**, **166**, **168**, **170**, **172**, **174** extending into the peripheral edge **90** that are disposed proximate to the tabs **52**, **54**, **56**, **58**, **60**, **62**, **64**, **66**, **68**, **70**, **72**, **74**, **76**, respectively. Further, the rectangular ring-shaped portion **50** has apertures **180**, **182**, **184** extending therethrough to allow an inlet fluid conduit **185** and an outlet fluid conduit **186** to be fluidly coupled to the cooling manifolds **30**, **38**. In one exemplary embodiment, the frame member **20** is constructed of plastic. Of course, in alternative embodiments, the frame member **22** could be constructed of other materials known to those skilled in the art.

Referring to FIG. 8, the frame member **24** has an identical structure as the frame member **22**. Accordingly, only a portion of the components of the frame member **24** will be discussed below. In particular, the frame member **24** includes a rectangular ring-shaped portion or body **250** and tabs **252**, **254**, **256**, **258**, **260**, **262**, **264**, **266**, **268**, **270**, **272**, **274**, **276**. The tabs **252-76** extend away from a peripheral edge **290** of the rectangular ring-shaped portion **250** in a first direction.

Referring to FIGS. 7-9, an explanation of how portions of the frame members **22**, **24** are coupled together will be provided before explaining the coupling together of the frame members **22**, **24** in their entirety. As shown, the frame member **24** has a tab **276** with a coupling feature **380** disposed of the distal end of the tab **276**. The coupling feature **380** is configured to be received in a portion of the slot **176** in the frame member **22** to obtain a snap-fit engagement between the frame members **22**, **24**. It should be noted that each of the tabs in the frame members **24**, **26** have a coupling feature similar to the coupling feature **380**.

Referring to FIGS. 2, 3 and 8, the battery cell assembly **18** is coupled together by disposing the battery cells **26**, **28** and the cooling fin **30** between the frame members **22**, **24**, and then positioning the frame members **22**, **24** adjacent to one another such that the coupling features of the tabs **252**, **254**, **256**, **258**, **260**, **262**, **264**, **266**, **268**, **270**, **272**, **274**, **276** of the frame member **24** engage the slots **152**, **154**, **156**, **158**, **160**, **162**, **164**, **166**, **168**, **170**, **172**, **174**, respectively, of the frame member **22** to fixedly hold the frame members **22**, **24** together.

Referring to FIG. 1, in an exemplary embodiment the battery cells **26**, **28** are lithium-ion pouch-type battery cells. Of course, other types of battery cells known to those skilled in the art could be utilized.

Referring to FIG. 2, the cooling fin **30** is configured to receive a coolant or fluid that flows through the manifold **30** to extract heat energy from the battery cells **26**, **28**. As shown, in one exemplary embodiment, the cooling fin **30** is disposed between the battery cells **26**, **28**.

Referring to FIG. 10, a battery module **400** in accordance with another exemplary embodiment is illustrated. The battery module **400** is configured to provide electrical power to either a primary drive train of the vehicle or an auxiliary

drive train of a vehicle. For purposes of discussion, only a portion of the battery module **400** will be described in greater detail below. In particular, referring to FIG. 11, the battery module **400** includes in part, a battery cell assembly **410**.

Referring to FIGS. 10-17, the battery cell assembly **410** includes frame members **422**, **424**, battery cells **426**, **428**, and a compressible spacer **430**. An advantage of the battery cell assembly **410** is that the assembly **410** utilizes frame members having tabs with apertures extending therethrough wherein the tabs are utilized to couple adjacent frame members together and to allow air flow through the apertures to cool battery cells within the battery cell assembly **410**.

The frame members **422**, **424** are configured to be coupled together to hold the battery cells **426**, **428** and the compressible spacer **430** therebetween, as will be discussed in greater detail below.

Referring to FIGS. 12-15, the frame member **422** includes a rectangular ring-shaped portion or body **429**, tabs **452**, **454**, **456**, **458**, **460**, **462**, **464**, **466**, **468**, **470**, **472**, cross-members **700**, **702**, **704**, **706**, **708** and a spacer portion **720**. The tabs **452**, **454**, **456**, **458**, **460**, **462**, **464**, **466**, **468**, **470**, **472** include apertures **552**, **554**, **556**, **558**, **560**, **562**, **564**, **568**, **570**, **572**, respectively, extending therethrough. Further, the tabs **452-472** extend away from a peripheral edge **590** of the rectangular ring-shaped portion **429** in a first direction. The rectangular ring-shaped portion **429** includes coupling members **652**, **654**, **656**, **658**, **660**, **662**, **664**, **668**, **670**, **672** extending from the inner region of the rectangular ring-shaped portion **429** that have distal ends proximate to the peripheral edge **590**. The coupling members **652-672** extend generally perpendicular to the tabs **452-472**, respectively, that are disposed proximate to the coupling members **652-672**, respectively.

In one exemplary embodiment, the rectangular ring-shaped portion **429** defines an open region **431**. The cross-members **700**, **702**, **704**, **706**, **708** extend across the open region **431** that are coupled to opposite sides of the rectangular ring-shaped portion **429**.

The spacing between the cross-members **700**, **702** and the positioning of the tabs **458**, **472** that allows air flow through a portion of the open region **431** will be explained. As shown, the tabs **458** and **472** are disposed on first and second sides, respectively, of the rectangular ring-shaped portion **429** and extend in the first direction. The tab **458** has leg portions **990**, **992** extending parallel to one another and a bridging portion **994** disposed between the leg portions **990**, **992** such that the aperture **558** is defined within the tab **458**. The tab **472** has leg portions **1010**, **1012** extending parallel to one another and a bridging portion **1014** disposed between the leg portions **1010**, **1012** such that the aperture **572** is defined within the tab **472**. The cross-members **700**, **702** are disposed parallel to one another and apart from one another such that a gap is formed therebetween in the open region **431**. A centerline **1024** extending through the cross-member **700** is co-planar with centerlines **996**, **1016** extending through the leg portions **990**, **1010**, respectively. Further, a centerline **1026** extending through the cross-member **702** is co-planar with centerlines **998**, **1018** extending through the leg portions **992**, **1012**, respectively, such that air flow occurs through the aperture **558** and through a gap between the cross-members **700**, **702** and further through the aperture **572**.

Referring to FIG. 15, the spacer portion **720** extends away from a rear surface **721** of the frame member **422**. The spacer portion **720** defines holes **722**, **724**, **726**, **728**, **730**, **732** (and other holes not shown on an opposite side of the frame assembly **422**) that allow the airflow therethrough into the open region **431** defined by the frame member **422** for cooling the battery cells **426**, **428**.

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In one exemplary embodiment, the frame member **422** is constructed of plastic. Of course, in alternative embodiments, the frame member **422** could be constructed of other materials known to those skilled in the art.

Referring to FIGS. **12** and **16**, the frame member **424** has an identical structure as the frame member **422**. Accordingly, only a portion of the components of the frame member **424** will be discussed below. In particular, the frame member **424** includes a rectangular ring-shaped portion or body **830** and tabs **852, 854, 856, 858, 860, 862, 864, 866, 868, 870**. The tabs **852, 854, 856, 858, 860, 862, 864, 866, 868, 870** have apertures **952, 954, 956, 958, 960, 962, 964, 966, 968, 970**, respectively, extending therethrough.

Referring to FIGS. **15, 16** and **17**, an explanation of how portions of the frame members **422, 424** are coupled together will be provided before explaining the coupling together of the frame members **422, 424** in their entirety. As shown, the frame member **424** has a tab **870** with an aperture **970** disposed therethrough. The coupling member **672** of the frame member **422** is configured to be received in the aperture **970** of the frame member **424** to obtain a snap-fit engagement between the frame members **422, 424**.

Referring to FIGS. **11, 12** and **16**, the battery cell assembly **410** is coupled together by disposing the battery cells **426, 428** and the compressible spacer **430** between the frame members **422, 424**, and then positioning the frame members **422, 424** adjacent to one another such that the tabs **852-870** of the frame member **424** engage the coupling members **652-672**, respectively, of the frame member **424** to fixedly hold the frame members **422, 424** together.

Referring to FIG. **11**, in an exemplary embodiment the battery cells **426, 428** are lithium-ion pouch-type battery cells. Of course, other types of battery cells known to those skilled in the art could be utilized.

Further, the compressible spacer **430** is configured to bias the battery cells **426, 428** away from the spacer **430** such that the battery cells **426, 428** are firmly held between the frame members **422, 424**.

While the invention has been described in detail in connection with only a limited number of embodiments, it should be readily understood that the invention is not limited to such disclosed embodiments. Rather, the invention can be modified to incorporate any number of variations, alterations, substitutions or equivalent arrangements not heretofore described, but which are commensurate with the spirit and scope of the invention. Additionally, while various embodiments of the invention have been described, it is to be understood that aspects of the invention may include only some of the described embodiments. Accordingly, the invention is not to be seen as limited by the foregoing description.

We claim:

1. A frame member, comprising:

a rectangular ring-shaped portion having a plurality of tabs extending away from a peripheral edge of the rectangular ring-shaped portion in a first direction, each tab of the plurality of tabs having an aperture extending therethrough such that air flows through each aperture, the rectangular ring-shaped portion further having a plurality of coupling members extending from an inner region of the rectangular ring-shaped portion and having distal ends proximate to the peripheral edge, each coupling member of the plurality coupling members extending generally perpendicular to a respective tab of the plurality of tabs that is disposed proximate to the respective coupling member.

2. The frame member of claim 1, wherein the rectangular ring-shaped portion further includes a spacer portion extend-

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ing away from a rear surface of the rectangular ring-shaped portion, the spacer portion defining a plurality of holes for allowing air flow therethrough into an open region defined by the rectangular ring-shaped portion.

3. The frame member of claim 1, wherein the frame member has first and second tabs of the plurality of tabs disposed on first and second sides, respectively, of the rectangular ring-shaped portion and extending in the first direction;

the first tab having first and second leg portions extending parallel to one another and a first bridging portion disposed between the first and second leg portions such that a first aperture is defined within the first tab;

the second tab having third and fourth leg portions extending parallel to one another and a second bridging portion disposed between the third and fourth leg portions such that a second aperture is defined within the second tab; and

the frame member further having first and second cross-members disposed across an open region defined by the rectangular ring-shaped portion, the first and second cross-members being disposed parallel to one another and apart from one another, wherein a centerline extending through the first cross-member is co-planar with first and second centerlines extending through the first and third leg portions, respectively, and a centerline extending through the second cross-member is co-planar with second and fourth centerlines extending through the second and fourth leg portions, respectively, such that the air flows through the first aperture and through a gap between the first and second cross-members and further through the second aperture.

4. A battery cell assembly, comprising:

a first frame member having a first plurality of tabs extending away from a first peripheral edge of the first frame member in a first direction, each tab of the first plurality of tabs having an aperture extending therethrough such that air flows through each aperture, the first frame member further having a first plurality of coupling members extending from an inner region of the first frame member and having distal ends proximate to the first peripheral edge, each coupling member of the first plurality coupling members extending generally perpendicular to a respective tab of the first plurality of tabs that is disposed proximate to the respective coupling member;

a second frame member having a second plurality of tabs extending away from a second peripheral edge of the second frame member in the first direction, each tab of the second plurality of tabs having an aperture extending therethrough; and

a battery cell disposed between the first and second frame members, and each tab of the second plurality of tabs of the second frame member is configured to engage a respective coupling member of the first plurality coupling members to fixedly hold the first and second frame members together.

5. The battery cell assembly of claim 4, wherein the second frame member further includes a second plurality of coupling members extending from an inner region of the second frame member and having distal ends proximate to the second peripheral edge, each coupling member of the second plurality coupling members extending generally perpendicular to a respective tab of the second plurality of tabs disposed proximate to the respective coupling member.

6. The battery cell assembly of claim 4, wherein the first frame member further includes a spacer portion extending away from a rear surface of the first frame member, the spacer

portion defining a plurality of holes for allowing air flow therethrough into an open region defined by the first frame member.

7. The battery cell assembly of claim 4, wherein the second frame member has a rectangular ring-shaped portion having 5 first and second tabs of the second plurality of tabs disposed on first and second sides, respectively, of the rectangular ring-shaped portion and extending in the first direction;

the first tab having first and second leg portions extending parallel to one another and a first bridging portion disposed between the first and second leg portions such that a first aperture is defined within the first tab;

the second tab having third and fourth leg portions extending parallel to one another and a second bridging portion disposed between the third and fourth leg portions such 15 that a second aperture is defined within the second tab;

the second frame member further having first and second cross-members disposed across an open region defined by the rectangular ring-shaped portion, the first and second cross-members being disposed parallel to one 20 another and apart from one another, wherein a centerline extending through the first cross-member is co-planar with first and second centerlines extending through the first and third leg portions, respectively, and a centerline extending through the second cross-member is co-planar 25 with second and fourth centerlines extending through the second and fourth leg portions, respectively, such that the air flows through the first aperture and through a gap between the first and second cross-members and further through the second aperture. 30

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